

## SEIZE THE MOMENT!

### PARSHAS YISRO

Contact us to  
Sponsor in Memory,  
in Honor, as a Merit

Chaim, an irreligious Jew once told a young Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l that although he knew absolutely nothing about Sabbath observance he still had a very strong belief in Hashem. He then went on to tell Rav Shlomo Zalman his story. He was drafted into the Russian army just as World War I started. Both sides dug holes (called foxholes) and shot at each other. After many hours there was a ceasefire to gather the dead and wounded. During that time, Chaim noticed religious Jews praying to Hashem with great intensity. When their prayers were complete their faces showed calm and comfort. Chaim could not feel that comfort because he was not religious and did not know how to pray. During one particularly fierce day of fighting, Chaim called out. G-D, it is not my fault that I don't know how to speak to you. My father never taught me. Please send me a sign that You are here, on the battlefield and I will learn what it means to be a good Jew. A moment later a single bullet hit Chaim's finger and he lost consciousness. When he awoke, in the hospital, he reinforced his commitment to learn about Judaism. After the war, Chaim remembered his commitment. He decided to postpone his learning for three months so that he could finish his degree and be able to earn a living. After the three months he began to study Torah but didn't feel his initial enthusiasm. He eventually gave-up and remained as ignorant as before. Had he seized his moment of inspiration and first studied Torah before finishing his degree, he very likely would have been a totally different person. He would have learned Torah and acquired an understanding of how to speak to Hashem. (based on a true story from Rabbi Pesach Krohn)

❖ **Rashi asks**, what did Yisro hear to make him want to join the Jewish people? **Rashi**, quoting the Talmud, says that he heard the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek.

Hashem had freed the Jewish nation from Egypt. When they approached the Red Sea, it split for them. So many open miracles occurred. The Sea split into 12 pathways, one for each tribe. The muddy floor became marble to make it easy to walk on. Fruit trees sprang up and fresh water became available. These are only a few of the numerous miracles that occurred. The roar of the waters splitting was even heard in distant countries. At that moment, all water in the world also split. The entire world knew about this miracle.

❖ **Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman** was the spiritual mentor of the Chevron Yeshiva in 1927. He asked, what was unique about Yisro? The entire world also heard about the same events. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Chasman answered that Yisro didn't merely hear. He took action. Others may have been moved and inspired for a short while but remained where they were. Yisro, on the other hand, was inspired and

*"And Yisro, the Priest of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe heard all that Hashem did for Moshe and to His People, Israel."  
(Shmos 18:1)*

acted upon it. He left his home and went to join the Jewish nation, thus changing his entire direction in life.

Throughout our lives we have moments of inspiration. We are inspired for a short while and then return to our regular routines. If we want the moments of inspiration to last and bring us closer to Hashem, we must act upon them. We must "Seize the Moment of

Inspiration" and do an action to concretize those feelings; Whether it is saying extra Tehillim, davening with more intensity or concentration (even for one tefillah) or learning a little extra.

❖ **Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto** in his book, The Path of the Just, discusses doing mitzvos with quickness. We can apply his idea here. He says that we should rush to do a mitzvah when the opportunity to do it presents itself or even when we think of doing it. "There is no greater danger than to delay the mitzvah for each new minute can bring a hindrance to doing the mitzvah". Similarly, there is no greater danger than to delay doing a concrete, positive action when inspired. For if we don't "Seize That Moment of Inspiration" we may lose it forever, losing our opportunity for personal growth.

**We must seize our moments of inspiration and act upon them immediately!**

*Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.*

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